

Minutes of the Fifty-Ninth Meeting of the  
**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE TASK FORCE**

DATE: June 13, 2023  
TIME: 5:00 p.m.  
PLACE: Milwaukee County Department of Transportation, 10320 W. Watertown Plank Road,  
Wauwatosa, Large Conference Room, 2nd Floor and Virtual Meeting

Members Present

Aloysius Nelson, Chair .....Director, Division of Veterans Services, Kenosha County  
Yolanda Adams ..... Board of Education Member, Kenosha Unified School District  
Huda Alkaff ..... Founder & Director, Wisconsin Green Muslims  
Donna Brown-Martin.....Commissioner, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission;  
Director, Milwaukee County Department of Transportation;  
Liaison to Advisory Committee on Regional Transportation Planning  
Annabell Bustillos..... Bilingual Outreach Advocate, BeLeaf Survivors  
Ella Dunbar ..... Program Services Manager, Social Development Commission, Milwaukee  
Brad Holz.....Board Member, Independence First  
Keith Martin..... Engineering Specialist – Advanced 2, WisDOT  
Andrea Mendez Barrutia.....Chapter Director for the new Techqueria Milwaukee Chapter  
Jackie Schellinger ..... Indian Community Representative, Retired Judge  
Theresa Schuerman..... Walworth County Bilingual Migrant Worker Outreach

Members Excused

Gina Green-Harris.....Director, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health Center for  
Community Engagement and Health Partnerships in Milwaukee  
N. Lynnette McNeely.....Legal Redress Chair, Waukesha County NAACP  
Pastor Ernest Ni’A ..... President, Racine African American Roundtable of Leaders

Guests and Staff Present

Christopher Hiebert.....Chief Transportation Engineer, SEWRPC  
Eric Lynde.....Chief Special Projects Planner, SEWRPC  
Benjamin McKay ..... Interim Executive Director, SEWRPC  
Miranda Page .....Land Use Planner, SEWRPC  
Nakeisha Payne..... Public Involvement and Outreach Manager, SEWRPC  
Jennifer Sarnecki..... Principal Transportation Planner, SEWRPC

**CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Nelson called the meeting of the Environmental Justice Task Force (EJTF) to order at 5:10 p.m., conducted a brief roll call, and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. Nelson introduced Ms. Bustillos as a new member representing Racine County.

## **APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 14, 2023, MEETING MINUTES**

Upon the assembly of a quorum, Mr. Nelson asked if there were any questions or comments on the March 14, 2023, meeting minutes (available [here](#)). Mr. Nelson then asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes. Mr. Holz moved, and Ms. Mendez Barrutia seconded the approval of the March 14, 2023, meeting minutes. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

## **UPDATE ON REGIONAL FOOD SYSTEM PLAN**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Mr. McKay provided an update the Regional Food System Plan (RFSP) and indicated that the goal of the presentation (available [here](#)) is to review how previous comments from the EJTF have been incorporated into Chapter 2 and summarize additional comments provided by the RFSP Advisory Committee. The following discussion occurred after Mr. McKay's update:

1. In response to a question from Ms. Schuerman, Mr. McKay and Ms. Page confirmed that the H-2A temporary agricultural visa program is included in the plan.
2. Ms. Schellinger asked how the RFSP fits into SEWRPC's work program. Mr. McKay responded that the plan was conducted for two primary reasons: it was requested by communities that have done local work on food issues and it fulfills a recommendation in VISION 2050 to develop a regional food system. Mr. McKay noted that the RFSP is another opportunity to communicate the benefits of VISION 2050, such as expanded transit service, planning for freight movement, supporting compact development patterns, and improving livability to attract more workers and residents to the Region. In response to Ms. Schellinger, Mr. McKay indicated that Table 2.6, Farms by Value of Sales and Size, includes hobby farms, many of which may comprise those farms that sell less than \$2,500 in agricultural products. Mr. McKay responded to a question from Ms. Schellinger about urban farming, noting that some communities have shown interest in determining how local zoning can accommodate urban agriculture.
3. In response to a question from Mr. Nelson about meeting frequency of the RFSP Advisory Committee, Mr. McKay stated that they have met twice and will likely meet three more times, once for each remaining chapter. He noted that the minutes are posted on the RFSP website (available [here](#)).
4. Ms. Mendez Barrutia asked what was included in the category entitled "other food manufacturing" in Table 2.14, Regional Food and Beverage Exported Sales. Mr. McKay and Ms. Page responded that this includes numerous subsectors, such as spices, which in aggregate generate a relatively large number of sales.
5. Ms. Brown-Martin noted that the chapter was thorough and has been enhanced based on the comments received from the EJTF and Advisory Committee. She stated that she looks forward to public review and comments.
6. Regarding Mr. McKay's presentation related to outreach to share information about the RFSP, including attending numerous farmers markets and community events throughout the Region, Ms. Brown-Martin indicated that it might be helpful for Commission staff to present at a future Board meeting of the Social Development Commission (SDC). Ms. Dunbar noted that Ms. Payne has

previously attended the SDC's Summit on Poverty and indicated that the next Summit is occurring on September 15. Ms. Payne noted that she is on the planning committee for the Summit and has shared information with the committee members, including the interactive maps related to food access, and offered to provide additional information as needed. Ms. Dunbar stated that a food pantry has been added at the former Northridge Mall site on the northwest side of Milwaukee and is well utilized given the recent reductions in food assistance and its location in a food desert. Ms. Dunbar offered to connect Commission staff to Alice's Garden, to expand the discussion of urban gardens.

7. Ms. Adams asked if Commission staff attended the 7 Mile Fair flea market and indicated that it would be a good location for RFSP outreach. Mr. McKay thanked Ms. Adams for the suggestion and responded that Commission staff would consider attending 7 Mile Fair.
8. In response to a question from Mr. Nelson regarding how Meals on Wheels is included in the RFSP, Ms. Page indicated that information has been collected and could be added to the RFSP in addition to the discussion of Senior Meal Sites in Chapter 3. Mr. Nelson noted that in Kenosha County, the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) operates the Meals on Wheels program and also offers senior dining programs. In response to a question from Ms. Schellinger about U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) involvement in the senior meals program in Kenosha County, Ms. Payne responded that meal programs are provided in partnership with Kenosha County ADRC and Kenosha Area Family and Aging Services, Inc. (KAFASI). Mr. McKay noted that this information can be included in the plan as appropriate to inform the recommendations in the RFSP. Ms. Payne and Ms. Schellinger suggested that Commission staff contact Ms. Schuerman regarding USDA food programs that may be applicable to the RFSP.

## **PRESENTATION ON ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED AREAS**

At the request of Mr. Nelson, Mr. Lynde provided a presentation on economically distressed areas (available [here](#)), which are defined by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) using criteria related to unemployment rate and per capita income. The presentation also summarized other ways the federal government attempts to identify disadvantaged communities for the purposes of funding distribution, and summarized equity analyses conducted by Commission staff for VISION 2050. This presentation was initially requested by Mr. Nelson at the March 14, 2023, EJTF meeting. The following discussion occurred during Mr. Lynde's presentation:

1. In response to a question by Ms. Schellinger about RAISE grants, Mr. Lynde responded that the annual RAISE discretionary grant program funds road, rail, transit, and port projects. Mr. Hiebert added that Commission staff had recently submitted a RAISE grant application that was not selected for funding and intended to apply again in the future with a strengthened application based on feedback from USDOT.
2. Regarding the VISION 2020 equity analyses, Ms. Schellinger asked if it would be fairer to say people of color who are experiencing poverty rather than people of color and people in poverty. Mr. McKay responded that Commission staff recognize this and analyze plan benefits and impacts for three population groups: people of color, families in poverty, and people with disabilities. Ms. Schellinger suggested a need to be sensitive to the fact that not all people of color are in poverty and that it is important to consider how policy could encourage consolidating poverty in communities of color. Ms. Brown-Martin noted that there are areas in Milwaukee where residents are limited by policies that prevent them from accessing other parts of the Region. She cited Highway 175 as an example of a past transportation project that created barriers for economic

development to residents of that area. She emphasized the need to deconstruct policies that continue a cycle of economic distress and limit people's ability to grow. Ms. Schellinger suggested a need to focus on the most effective way to lessen poverty within the purview of the Commission's work, citing transportation access to jobs as an example. Mr. McKay indicated that the Commission's regional plans, most notably VISION 2050, have focused on compact development and redevelopment, development that has a mix of uses and is walkable, supports transit access, and supports multimodal transportation, noting that these are concepts that fit the Region's most densely populated areas. He also stated that many of the less urban areas of the Region are experiencing problems related to housing and attracting residents to fill job openings and that Commission staff has been involved in assisting some communities with addressing these types of issues. In addition, he noted that Commission staff is initiating another interim review and update of VISION 2050.

3. Ms. Dunbar described work the SDC is doing, including SDC's Institute on Poverty and Systemic Racism. She suggested that Jennifer Harris of the SDC staff may want to utilize some of the Commission's data as she leads SDC's work in this area.

Mr. Nelson stated that this is an important topic for the EJTF to discuss and expressed concern that funding is not being appropriately allocated to distressed areas. He suggested that Commission staff include the topic again on a future agenda.

## **REVIEW OF UPCOMING ON-BOARD TRANSIT SURVEY AND OUTREACH IDEAS**

At the request of Mr. Nelson, Mr. Hiebert described an upcoming survey Commission staff will be conducting on board transit vehicles across the Region, indicating the survey will ask riders for information such as trip purpose, socioeconomic characteristics, availability of other transportation alternatives, and travel modes used to access transit. He noted that staff wants to improve survey data by conducting additional public outreach and distributed a handout related to the survey (available [here](#)).

1. Ms. Brown-Martin asked if the surveys would be conducted on paratransit vehicles. Mr. Hiebert responded that staff has not in the past but could provide surveys to the drivers to distribute to riders.
2. Ms. Schellinger asked about providing incentives for riders to complete the survey. Mr. Hiebert indicated that the Commission has not provided incentives in the past and may not have the budget to provide incentives.
3. Ms. Mendez Barrutia asked if the survey would be available in different languages. Mr. Hiebert responded that it will be available in English and Spanish.
4. Mr. Nelson asked about providing a QR code on the handout. Mr. Hiebert indicated that the survey form itself will have a QR code directing riders to an online version of the survey.
5. Ms. Dunbar asked about using kiosks. Mr. Hiebert responded that the surveys need to be distributed on transit vehicles on specific dates so staff would not be using kiosks. Ms. Dunbar indicated she would distribute the handout at SDC to encourage individuals to complete surveys when they receive them on board transit vehicles.

## **OVERVIEW OF U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY CLIMATE POLLUTION REDUCTION GRANT**

At the request of Mr. Nelson, Mr. McKay described Commission staff support in preparing a climate action plan using funding from a non-competitive planning grant provided to the Milwaukee metro area as part of EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) program. He noted that staff is working with the City of Milwaukee, which recently led preparation of a Climate and Equity Plan, to expand that plan to include any interested county or community in the four-county metro area. He stated that the purpose of the planning grant effort is to develop a climate action plan aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollution. Developing the climate action plan then makes the metro area eligible to apply for implementation grants through the CPRG program. Mr. McKay noted that EJ benefit analysis and outreach are major components of the planning process.

## **REVIEW OF EJTF ACTION ITEM LIST**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Ms. Sarnecki reviewed the current action item list, which was linked within the agenda (available [here](#)). Ms. Schellinger noted she would like to move forward with her suggestions for a panel of local planners and for an EJTF meeting devoted to discussing equal justice as it relates to seniors. Mr. McKay and Ms. Schellinger agreed to discuss the best timing and format (i.e., virtual or in person, weekend or weekday) for these meetings.

## **OVERVIEW OF COMPOSITION OF APPLICANTS FOR RECENTLY FILLED COMMISSION POSITIONS**

At Mr. Nelson's request, Mr. McKay provided a summary of recent applicants for Commission positions, including three filled positions. The first position for a human resources accounting specialist had several applicants, including six white females, two white males, and one Hispanic female, and was filled by a white female. The second position for a transportation planner had few applicants overall, including two Asian females and one white male, and was filled by a white male. The third position for executive director included five applicants that were interviewed, including three white males, one white female, and one black male. The white female applicant, Stephanie Hacker, was appointed by the Commission at the May Executive Committee meeting. Mr. McKay stated that Ms. Hacker would assume the Executive Director role in July.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any public comments. There were none.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Nelson asked if there were any announcements and correspondence. There were none.

## **NEXT MEETING DATES**

Mr. Nelson indicated that the next meeting is Tuesday, September 12, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. and the meeting is planned to be held virtually. He noted that the subsequent meeting would be in December and would be held in person.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Nelson requested a motion to adjourn. Ms. Schellinger moved, and Mr. Holz seconded the motion to adjourn. The motion was approved unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Sarnecki  
Recording Secretary

\*\*\*

BRM/EDL/JBS  
EJTF Minutes - Mtg 59 - 6-13-2023 (00269571).DOCX (PDF: #269794)